



Department of Toxic Substances Control



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5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, California 90630

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Governor

February 14, 2002

To the Public Notice Mailing List for the **Vandenberg Air Force Base** Installation
Restoration Program:

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT REQUESTED

Proposed Stormwater Erosion Mitigation at Areas 2 and 3 of Site 20

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) invites the public to review and comment on a draft Negative Declaration for a proposed stormwater erosion mitigation project at Vandenberg Air Force Base. The draft Negative Declaration is the determination by DTSC that the proposed actions would not result in a significant impact to the environment. The draft Negative Declaration was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The proposed project is for Areas 2 and 3 of Installation Restoration Program (IRP) Site 20. Site 20 encompasses approximately 35 acres on Vandenberg AFB, next to the main cantonment area and east of Utah Avenue. Area 2 is a decommissioned landfill. Area 3 includes a former drum disposal site and an unexploded ordnance (UXO) area. Two ravines at the site (a larger, primary one, and a smaller, secondary one) have been eroded by stormwater flow. Continued erosion at Site 20 may expose and mobilize chemicals and other substances of potential concern at the site, and may adversely affect human health and the environment. The erosion mitigation is an interim measure to prevent exposure until a scheduled environmental investigation and possible remediation are completed at the site.

The proposed mitigation measures at Site 20 include installing a series of energy dissipaters built of gabions (wire baskets that contain coarse aggregate) in the primary ravine; digging V-ditches parallel to the top edge of the primary ravine to divert runoff; and installing a corrugated metal pipe in the secondary ravine to divert the stormwater into the primary ravine. After these actions are complete, critical areas of the site will be revegetated. The Department of the Air Force, the responsible party for the site, will conduct these activities.

The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our Web-site at www.dtsc.ca.gov.

Public Notice Mailing List
Stormwater Erosion Mitigation
Site 20, Vandenberg AFB
February 14, 2002
Page 2

The proposed action is part of the IRP, a Department of Defense program for cleaning up contamination resulting from past activities at military bases. The IRP was designed to meet the requirements of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), a federal law. CEQA is a state law that requires DTSC to review the proposed cleanup actions to make sure that those actions themselves will not harm the environment. For example, DTSC looked at whether the installation of the energy dissipater gabions, V-ditch, and stormwater diversion piping system would disturb plant or animal habitat, create dust pollution, etc. DTSC's review, which is detailed in the draft Negative Declaration, concluded that the activities associated with the proposed project will not result in any such effects.

The 30-day public comment period for the CEQA draft Negative Declaration begins on February 19, 2002 and extends through March 21, 2002. All comments postmarked by March 21, 2002 will be considered by DTSC before a final decision is made. Please refer to the public notice at the end of this letter for further information on where to find the document and how to submit comments. The public notice contains information not only on the draft Negative Declaration, but on Vandenberg AFB's request for public review and comment on the proposed stormwater erosion mitigation itself. The public review and comment periods for the draft Negative Declaration and for the stormwater erosion mitigation are being conducted concurrently.

Please call me at (714) 484-5432 or Dr. Ning-Wu Chang at (714) 484-5485, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Emad B. Yemut, P.E.
Unit Chief
Federal Facilities Unit A
Southern California Branch
Office of Military Facilities

PUBLIC NOTICE

**PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT REQUESTED
PROPOSED STORMWATER EROSION CONTROL PROJECT
VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA**

The public is invited to review and comment on a proposed plan for controlling stormwater erosion at a former landfill and drum disposal site on Vandenberg Air Force Base (AFB). An Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) has been prepared for Site 20, a decommissioned landfill, an unexploded ordnance area, and a former drum disposal site. This document is available for public review and comment from February 19 through March 21, 2002. The EE/CA describes the Air Force's proposed plan for controlling stormwater erosion that could cause hazardous substances to migrate or be released. This site was primarily used as a disposal site at Vandenberg AFB between 1942 and 1957. Most of the waste disposed of at the site was household refuse, but included some incinerator ash and slag, scrap metal, waste pesticides, and waste petroleum. Environmental investigations performed at Site 20 under the Installation Restoration Program (IRP) indicate that stormwater that collects west of Site 20 is channeled onto the site through culverts. Stormwater from the culvert discharge points and local site runoff contribute to the erosion of fill material, soils, and bedrock in the primary ravine between the landfill and drum disposal area.

Eleven erosion mitigation alternatives for Site 20 were identified and screened. After initial screening, the Air Force selected three alternatives for detailed evaluation: installing a stormwater energy dissipater, backfilling the primary ravine, and implementing geogrid slope stabilization. Vandenberg assessed the three alternatives and plans to implement the stormwater energy dissipater alternative. Vandenberg AFB will be drafting a construction work plan and an engineering design. Several different methods of erosion mitigation were considered and compared, based on technical feasibility, cost, time constraints, and protection of human health and the environment. The EE/CA describes all the options considered, and the reasons for selecting the proposed remedy. The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board will need to approve the plan and design before construction of the stormwater dissipater alternative begins.

The public review and comment period for the EE/CA is being conducted in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) non-time critical removal action regulations. Additionally, DTSC is requesting public comment on a proposed Negative Declaration for the removal action pursuant to the California

Public Notice Mailing List
Stormwater Erosion Mitigation
Site 20, Vandenberg AFB
February 14, 2002
Page 4

Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Negative Declaration states that the proposed erosion mitigation alternative will not result in a significant negative impact on the environment, as defined in the Public Resources Code, Section 21068.

Public comments regarding the Site 20 EE/CA and Negative Declaration are welcome. The 30-day public comment period begins February 19, 2002 and ends at 4 p.m. March 21, 2002. Please forward written comments on the EE/CA to Vandenberg AFB's IRP Public Affairs representative, Ron MacLelland, 30 CES/CEVCR, 806 13th St, Suite 116, Vandenberg AFB, CA 93437-5242. For more information, call (805) 606-2071.

Written comments on the Negative Declaration should be postmarked no later than March 21, 2002, and sent to Dr. Ning-Wu Chang, Project Manager, Department of Toxic Substances Control, 5796 Corporate Avenue, Cypress, CA 90630. Comments may also be e-mailed by March 21, 2001 to nchang@dtsc.ca.gov.

The EE/CA, Negative Declaration, and other documents related to the environmental cleanup at Vandenberg AFB are available at the following locations:

Lompoc Public Library
Public Documents Section
501 East North Ave.
Lompoc, CA 93436
Call (805) 736-3477 for current hours

Vandenberg AFB Library
Public Documents Section
100 Community Loop, Bldg. 10343
Vandenberg, AFB CA 93437
Hours: M-Th 12-9 p.m.; F-Sun 12-6 p.m.

Regional Water Quality Control Board
81 Higuera Street, Suite 200
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Hours: M-F 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Negative Declaration is also available at the DTSC Cypress office. Please call Ester Deguzman at (714) 484-5336 to arrange an appointment.